



The Front Porch

**The Newsletter of the City of Springfield,
Planning and Development Department's
Neighborhood Conservation Office
Fall/Winter 1999 Issue**

Mission:

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of our community. Springfield must strive to promote strong neighborhoods that instill pride in their residents. Therefore, the Neighborhood Conservation Office is committed to working with the Community to ensure strong viable neighborhoods.

Welcome to the first edition of "The Front Porch." This newsletter, published for you – the residents of Springfield's neighborhoods, is designed to provide you with useful information about events and projects in city neighborhoods, and give you ideas on how to improve your neighborhood. We hope that you enjoy the newsletter and find the information that is provided both useful and entertaining.

"The Front Porch" is published by the Neighborhood Conservation Office (NCO), a division of the Department of Planning and Development. The Neighborhood Conservation Office is comprised of Principal Planner Brendan Griesemer and Senior Planner Christian Lentz. The NCO also has access to other Planning and Development Department support staff on a project by project basis.

The NCO coordinates policies and programs that provide services to the city's neighborhoods. The Planning and Development Department has always maintained a neighborhood planning function; however, a recent focus on city neighborhood issues resulted in the creation of the NCO in the summer of 1996. Since its inception, the NCO has overseen the creation of two (2) neighborhood plans and is currently updating two (2) others. All of the city's neighborhood plans identify neighborhood issues and propose strategies to address those issues. Some programs

and activities that have resulted in part from the neighborhood planning process are:

- Urban Conservation Districts
- City/SMSU Cooperative Agreement
- Certified Local Government
- Vision 20/20 Neighborhood Element
- Neighborhood Initiated Comprehensive Rezoning
- Neighborhood Teams Program



The NCO serves a coordinating role between city departments and neighborhoods. For example, the Neighborhood Teams Program requires the NCO to help resolve neighborhood concerns by coordinating the interaction between neighborhood organizations and city code enforcement departments. A recent targeted housing program allows the NCO to oversee the channeling of funds to areas with weaker housing stock by providing for low interest loans on owner occupied homes.

Springfield's neighborhoods are the building blocks that form the base of the city's foundation. All of the NCO's activities are a means to succeed in our mission: "...to promote strong neighborhoods that instill pride in their residents." Our newsletter offers us another outlet to encourage you to participate in your community. **Ep**

Senate Bill 20 Encourages Housing Rehabilitation

Governor Mel Carnahan signed two new pieces of legislation into law on July 8, 1999. The New Enterprise Creation Act (Senate Bill 518) and the Housing Preservation Program (Senate Bill 20) compliment each other with the shared goal of strengthening the state's communities. "Building our businesses strengthens our communities;

building our communities makes new business opportunities possible," said Carnahan.

While both pieces of legislation are intended to improve neighborhoods throughout Missouri, it is a portion of Senate Bill 20 that could impact the pocket book of some of Springfield's home owners. A portion of the bill, the

(continued on next page)



The Front Porch

"Rebuilding Communities and Neighborhood Preservation Act," authorizes state income tax credits for residential rehabilitation and construction costs. Property owners seeking to rehabilitate their homes in certain neighborhoods may be eligible for a state income tax credit of up to 25% of the rehabilitation costs. In some instances, substantial rehabilitation of older homes (homes at least 50 years old) by the home owner may result in a state income tax credit of up to 35% of the rehabilitation costs. There is also a provision for a 15% state income tax credit for new construction. Property owners are eligible for the state income tax credit only once in a 10 year period. The credit may be applied to taxes owed up to 3 years prior to the credit or, for 5 years following certification of the credit.

To qualify for the state income tax credits, an owner occupied structure must be located in a "distressed community" or be an "eligible residence" as defined by the State of Missouri. A "distressed community" is a census block area with a median household income of less than 70% of the overall metropolitan area. Distressed communities in the

city of Springfield are mapped and currently contain many portions of Mid-Town, Woodland Heights, West Central, Grant Beach, Phelps Grove and other neighborhoods. An "eligible residence" is a single-family residence forty years or older located in a census block with a median household income of less than 90% of the overall metropolitan area. Distressed community maps can be obtained at the Planning and Development office on the second floor of the Busch Building at 840 Boonville Avenue. The maps will be updated in the near future to include census blocks in which eligible residences may be located.

Funding for the program is extremely limited. Applications will be accepted beginning January 3, 2000 and will be selected based on a random drawing. For information on how to apply for state income tax credits under the "Rebuilding Communities and Neighborhood Preservation Act," contact Ann Perry, of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, (573) 522-8006. You can also view Senate Bill 20 on the Missouri State Senate web page at: www.senate.state.mo.us. **FP**

Vision 20/20 Neighborhoods Plan Element Moves Forward



The Neighborhoods Plan Element of the City's comprehensive plan is close to adoption. City Council has referred the plan to a committee of its members.

This Plan Element, along with the other Vision 20/20 elements, will serve as a policy document for staff, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council when making decisions concerning issues that relate to neighborhoods. This document is not an ordinance; it provides a vision as to what neighborhoods should be in the future.

It can be looked at as an "idea" document. Many recommendations in the Plan Element suggest new ordinances, processes or programs. These recommendations will not be accomplished overnight, but rather reviewed and researched as to how they can be implemented to improve the City's neighborhoods.

Plan content, including vision statements, goals, objectives and actions, was derived from numerous Neighborhoods Focus Group meetings and citizen input. Key visions and objectives of the *Housing, Parks, Open Space and Greenways, and Community Quality and Design Focus Groups* were also incorporated into this document.

Key components of the element include: Neighborhood Planning and Design Principles, Neighborhood Sustainability, Neighborhood Physical Planning and

Reinvestment, Neighborhood Street Network, Park System, Bicyclist and Pedestrian Systems, Housing Design, Neighborhood Services and Facilities, Neighborhood Organization, Role of the Public Sector, and Code Enforcement.

The citizen input process for this document has been extensive. In addition to the original focus group meetings, three public meetings have been held on this Plan Element. City Council held a public hearing on November 22, 1999 and referred the document to its Plans and Policies Committee. Copies of the Neighborhoods Plan Element can be obtained by calling the Department of Planning and Development at 864-1033. **FP**

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The Front Porch

General Notes

- The City of Springfield was designated as a Certified Local Government (CLG) on September 7, 1999. The CLG designation makes Springfield eligible to receive grant funds for historic preservation that are set aside for Certified Local Governments under federal law. Another benefit to being a CLG is that the Landmarks Board and Mayor are given the right to review local nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. Including Springfield, 23 cities in Missouri have achieved CLG status. **FP**
- The Neighborhood Conservation Office is currently working on updates to the Rountree and Mid-Town Neighborhood plans. The plan updates are expected to be completed by the Spring of 2000. **FP**

Springfield is eligible to receive historic preservation grant funds specifically set aside for Certified Local Governments.



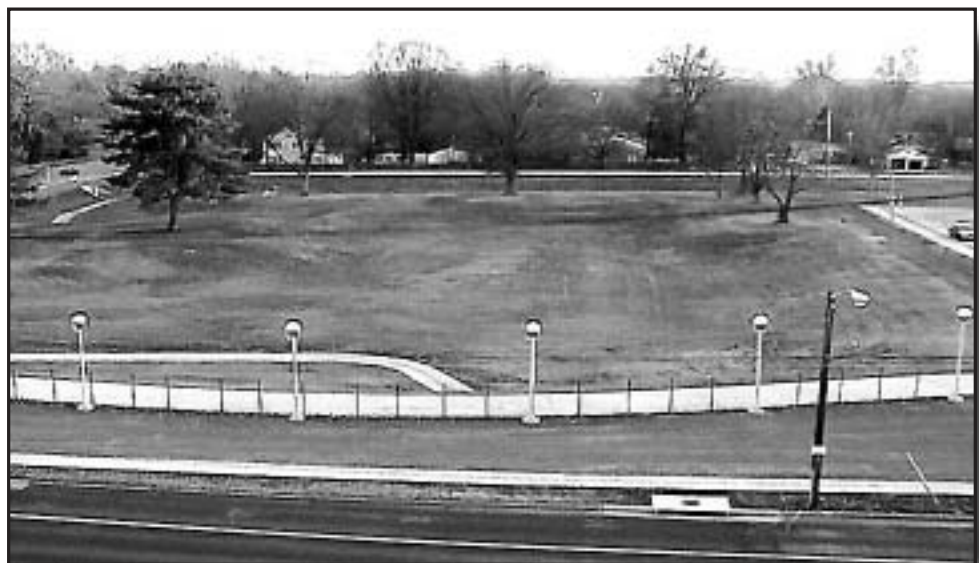
Regional Storm Water Detention Facility Complete

A regional storm water detention facility was recently completed at the southwest corner of Grand and National. This project, which was recommended in the Phelps Grove Neighborhood Plan, was designed to alleviate storm water flooding problems in portions of the Phelps Grove neighborhood. The project is actually three separate basins that function in a complementary manner. The five acre basin is designed to hold approximately 435,000 cubic feet of storm water and control the 100 year rainfall event. The basin collects runoff from a 75 acre drainage area which stretches from Grand Street as far north as Cherry Street and generally between National on the east and Kings on the west. Prior to basin construction, many yards, basements and streets experienced flooding problems during heavy rainfall due to a very old and inadequate storm water system.

The detention basin was designed by Public Works Engineering staff in cooperation with Southwest Missouri State University staff and input from the Phelps Neighborhood Association. Key design components included retaining as many existing mature trees as possible,

gentle bank slopes and a meandering design that improved the aesthetics of the basins while still providing a functional storm water detention basin.

Construction of the detention basin was made possible through a cost-sharing cooperative agreement between the City of Springfield and Southwest Missouri State University. Funding for the City's portion of this agreement came from storm water detention buyout funding. In addition to construction of the basin, the City has constructed storm water inlets along National Avenue north of Grand to alleviate flooding on National. **FP**



The five acre regional storm water detention facility at Grand and National Avenues provides a green space buffer for the adjacent Phelps Grove neighborhood.



The Front Porch

Publication Spotlight

- *Citizen's Service Assistance Packet* - This packet was put together to help citizens find where to go for help and information. The packet contains phone numbers for City offices, a list of information pieces available, "How To..." brochures, and useful information to help keep your neighborhood healthy, clean and safe. To receive a packet, call the Public Information Office at 864-1010. **FP**
- *Springfield Historic Register* - The Springfield Historic Register is a listing of historic landmarks, sites, districts, and Civil War sites with dates of Landmarks Board and City Council approval and of National Register designation. To obtain a copy, call the Department of Planning and Development at 864-1033. **FP**



Event Calendar for December, 1999 & January, 2000

If you have an event in your neighborhood that you would like to see on the Events Calendar, please contact the Department of Planning and Development at 864-1033.

• **Through January 4**

Ozark Mountain Christmas/The Festival of Lights

• **December 31**

First Night Springfield 2000



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